



# Marist Brothers – Irmãos

Province of Southern Africa – Província da

## **NEWSLETTER**

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**"Anyone who does anything  
to help a child in his life  
is a hero to me." (Fred Rogers)**

# OUR JUBILARIANS 2018

**22 September**  
**Norbert Mwila**  
**&**  
**Stephen Phiri**  
**25 years**



**7 October**  
**Joe Walton**  
**&**  
**Vincent George**  
**50 years**



**13 October**  
**Auxensio**  
**Dickson**  
**25 years**



GIVE THANKS  
TO THE LORD,  
FOR HE IS GOOD;  
HIS LOVE ENDURES  
FOREVER.

PSALM 137:1

# MESSAGE FROM BROTHER NORBERT

## Support for the Marist Youth and Skills Centre from a Traditional Leader

**A** month ago – on 27 September, to be precise - I was deeply grateful and honoured to be a part of a delegation from St. Marcellin's Skills Centre that paid a visit to his Royal Highness, Chief Nkana of the Lamba people on the Copperbelt of Zambia. The visit to the Palace was organised by Mr. David Kaluba, the Director of the Marist Youth and Skills Centre.

The main purpose of the visit was to pay tribute to his Royal highness and to thank him for having allocated a large piece of land for the creation of a centre that would empower the youth with life skills especially in agriculture.

In his address to the delegation, his Royal highness commended the Church for the role of evangelisation that embraces both preaching the word of God and empowering people with life skills, especially needy young people. What his Royal highness said resonated with us when he pointed out that, "The Church and Government including traditional Chiefs are meant to work in partnership in providing social services for the people and ensuring sustainable and integral development."

St. Marcellin's Youth and Skills Centre has been privileged to have the unwavering spiritual and moral support of his Royal Highness. He had been the guest of honour at the 2017 graduation ceremony.

What has inspired me even further is to note the pride of place his Royal Highness has given to the needy young people. He wishes to see them empowered with various life skills such as carpentry, tailoring, computer literacy and farming. That was the reason the Chief allocated St. Marcellin's Youth Skills Centre 35 hectare piece of land.

I was impressed and heartened by the desire of his Royal highness to continue supporting the Skills Training Centre in his local area. He realises that many young people in his domain are disadvantaged, and that most of them would not have access to state- or private-colleges and universities.

The Lord wishes us to be creative and bridge-builders like Mary in Cana. We are challenged to respond to the needs of young people in the world around us.

Inspired by Mary, we feel called to:

- Be a prophetic reminder of the common dignity and fundamental equality of the entire people of God.
- Be agents of change, messengers of peace, transforming lives of young people through an education that integrates awakening faith and living by Gospel values.

May the Lord bless people of good will to act with ever-greater generosity

  
NORBERT



**Br Emmanuel, Br Norbert, Chief Nkana, Mr. Kaluba, Mr. Maliti, Mr. Luhanga and Mr. Chilikisha**

# BIRTHDAYS

NOVEMBER	
10-11-1994	Gerónimo Raimundo
13-11-1932	João Torcato
16-11-1984	Francis Ndapisha
17-11-1968	Boniface Chirambo
21-11-1977	Fortune Chakasara
24-11-1968	António Viana
24-11-1994	João Gabriel
27-11-1948	Vincent George
28-11-1986	Mark Chikandwe

DECEMBER	
15-12-1990	José Ngongue (nov.ad.2017)
23-12-1941	João Reis
23-12-1949	Denis Ntacyica
25-12-1982	Steven Phiri
30-12-1934	Emmanuel Lapointe

JANUARY	
01-01-1925	Paul Nkhoma
01-01-1986	Sábado Valia
07-01-1986	Raymond Mbao
07-01-1993	Christopher Chagunda
08-01-1977	Ebel Muteveri
20-01-1963	Evaristus Kasambwe
21-01-1995	Benson Taonele (nov. ad.2017)
23-01-1977	Reuben Banda
27-01-1994	Sydney Moyenda (nov.ad.2018)
28-01-1962	Alexander Damalekani
29-01-1978	Maria Bobillo (Int. Comm.)



- 🌹 **BROTHER ANGEL MANSOA** who has gone to Spain for a complete medical check-up.
- 🌹 **BROTHER NEIL MCGURK** who is will undergo heart surgery on Monday 29 October.
- 🌹 That the recent **SYNOD ON YOUNG PEOPLE** may bear lasting fruit.
- 🌹 For **PEACE** in troubled parts of the world: Syria, Nigeria, D.R. Congo, South Sudan ...

# XV ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS– OCTOBER 2018

Address by Br. Ernesto Sánchez Barba, F.M.S., Superior General

**D**ear Pope Francis, Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, Superiors General, Religious, Lay men and women, and young people present in this Synod,

My words focus on number 90 of the *Instrumentum Laboris*, which says, when presenting life itself as a vocation, “**So, it is a matter of promoting a renewed vocational culture**”.

It was St John Paul II who used the phrase *vocational culture* in 1992, saying, “I desire, first of all, to call attention to the urgency of cultivating what we could call, “basic vocational attitudes”, which give life to an authentic “culture of vocation”.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Last year Pope Francis told the participants of the Italian National Congress on Vocation Ministry, “There is an urgent need to foster a new “vocational culture” within Christian communities.”<sup>[2]</sup>

In our days, we must approach this task humbly, more as disciples than as masters, seeking to co-create the dream of God, hand in hand with young people themselves.

Do we think that young people understand the words we use? Do terms like vocation, discernment or the like mean anything to them?

*Promoting a renewed vocational culture* involves seeking to connect with the new generation, being on the same wavelength, with a positive mind-set, finding the right language and understanding where they are coming from. We need to create conditions for each young person to be the principal artisan of his or her own vocation, recognising the seed within that is waiting to germinate, grow, develop and bear fruit.

Isn't it obvious that the Gospel speaks to the young and challenges them, but the same cannot be said of our “religious” structures? We have to be capable of

making the structural changes needed to move forward, daring to put aside what must die, in order to welcome the newness of a world that continues to surprise us inasmuch as it is the hands of God.

Promoting a *vocational culture* involves our capacity to create synergy. Such synergy begins with a broader vocational ministry, as is indicated in number 86 of the *Instrumentum Laboris*. It needs to be integrated into other pastoral activities associated with education, the family, social action etc.

It is a synergy that we can adopt with increasing dynamism in our attempt to be and act as a single body, giving value to and promoting charisms and ministries in all their diversity. We need to begin with the gift of the vocation of laypeople, who make up the majority of the baptised, including marriage as a vocation, as well as valuing and appreciating the gift of consecrated life with its various charisms and the gift of ministerial priesthood.

To conclude, I believe that we must act more energetically to stoke the fire of our passion for following Jesus and making him known. Stoking the fire in ourselves, and in those engaged in our Institutions, for I believe that it is mainly by “being caught” that we will be able to pass the fire on to generations to come.

Mary was able to welcome newness because her heart was full of God's warmth. May she touch our hearts with this fire and inner freedom.

Many thanks



[1]JOHN PAUL II, *Message for the 30th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 8 September 1992, N°.2.*

[2]POPE FRANCIS, *Discourse of the Holy Father Francis to the participants of the Congress arranged by the National Office of Vocations Ministry of the Italian Bishops Conference (CEI), Paul VI Hall, 5 January 2017*



## OUR PROVINCIAL COUNCIL AT WORK IN LUSAKA



## RETREAT FOR POSTULANTS IN MTENDERE, MALAWI



During the third week of September, Brother Teófilo Minga animated the retreat focussing on Marist spirituality, taking as a starting point our text, ***Water from the Rock***. The evaluation by the young men was very positive.

There are 13 postulants at the moment: 2 from Zimbabwe, 2 from Mozambique, 3 from Angola and 6 from Malawi. The formators are Brothers Gilbert Zenda (master of postulants), Nicholas Banda and Br. João Reis.



# A REFLECTION ON THE ABUSE CRISIS IN THE CHURCH

## THE WEIGHT OF IT ALL

**A** few months ago, as I was dusting, I picked up one of my most precious things—a bowl that mum had given me. I don't know how it happened, but it just slipped from my grip, and once it met the slate of the kitchen floor, it shattered. I was devastated. I sat down on the floor amid the pieces and just felt overwhelmed with sadness. How could I have let this happen, I thought. How careless, how stupid, how clumsy—the list went on. Eventually, I swept up the pieces and put them in the bin. And just like that, there was no trace of the bowl. It was gone. I probably expected too much of it really: how can a little bowl be expected to hold the weight of memory?



Along with our joyous memories, all of us carry some heavy memories in our hearts. There is a heaviness that is reshaping the collective Catholic memory at the moment, I suspect. Hardly a day passes without some new revelation about historical institutional sexual abuse and cover-up. It seems relentless. This is a time of reckoning, of resignations and of apologies. It is a bitter time for many, and there are so many questions: How could some church leaders have thought covering up abusive behaviour was an okay strategy? How could the women and men who were looked up to and revered have been capable of such appalling disregard for the humanity of the most vulnerable? How could some of the senior church leaders have treated those who were abused with such disdain and disregard?

For some it is a time of immense sadness and grief. This was not their experience, but they are now left to carry the burden of atoning for the wrongs of the past. And some Catholics, I suspect, just feel powerless and fragile: unsure what to do or say, wondering about what lessons can be learned and thinking about how this shameful past is going to inform the future.

And some mornings, after reading about the latest revelations, I wonder if the weight of this painful time is going to break the spirits of the people of God. Are there going to be too many lost and broken people? How will the people of God rebuild and recover and remain faithful? How will they hold the weight of these shameful memories and continue the work of proclaiming the good

news? Because when we use the word 'church', we are talking about people—all the baptised in whatever role they may hold in this institution that began with a man who was one with God and whose every action sprang from this relationship.

But then I remember that we are not alone. This church is built upon the shoulders of the generations of God's people who have gone before us. The prayers of their experience pave the way for ours. The laments of their time offer a language for our cries of 'How long, O Lord?' Their strength and courage, their faithfulness in their God, can offer hope for us in our time and space.

And we are not alone because we are an incarnational people and we believe that God is present to us at every moment of our lives—if we have the eyes to see, the ears to hear and the heart to welcome. And we can fix our eyes on the cross.

At different times in our lives, we all stand in different positions in relation to the cross, I suspect. There are times when we feel we are on the cross with Christ. Times when we are at the foot of the cross, helpless, with compassion-filled hearts. Times when we sit at the tomb, paralysed by grief. And there are times when we meet the risen Lord on the journey. So, wherever we are at the moment, perhaps it helps to take into our hearts that we proclaim a Christ who brings hearing to the deaf and sight to the blind, and who gives words to those who cannot speak. A Christ who looks deeply at the other, goes to the depths of suffering for the other and rises from it to bring new life. The words of Richard Rohr may help with this: ***One great idea of the biblical revelation is that God is manifest in the ordinary, in the actual, in the daily, in the now, in the concrete incarnations of life, and not through purity codes and moral achievement contests, which are seldom achieved anyway ... We do not think ourselves into new ways of living, we live ourselves into new ways of thinking ... The most courageous thing we will ever do is to bear humbly the mystery of our own reality.***

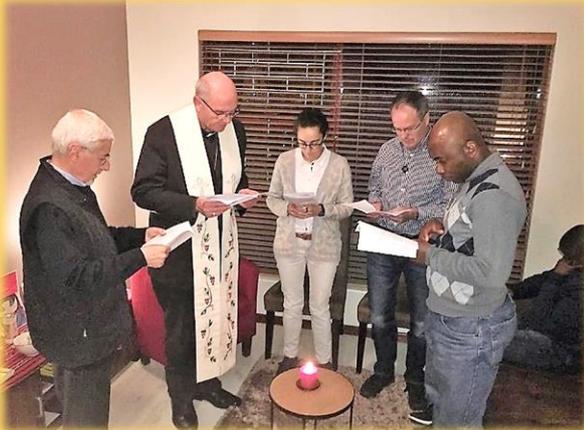
So let us bow our heads and bear humbly the grief and shame of this time. Let us invite the Jesus of the resurrection to walk this mystery with us. Because, unlike my little bowl, the weight is not too heavy for him.



(Cathy Jenkins,  
Director of the Archbishop's Office for  
Evangelisation, Melbourne)

## **COMMISSIONING & BLESSING OF ATLANTIS COMMUNITY**

**By Archbishop Stephen Brislin of Cape Town: 19 Sep 2018**



## **ANNUAL PROFESSIONS AT MIC 26 AUGUST 2018**



**Forty-four Brothers professed Annual Vows on this occasion,  
of whom twenty-one belong to the Province of Southern Africa**



# RETREAT FOR OUR BROTHERS IN ANNUAL PROFESSION



**F**rom Wednesday, 29 August to Thursday morning, 4 September, fourteen Brothers in A.P. from around the Province came together for their annual retreat at the Benedictine Sisters Monastery at Chipata, Zambia. Brother Tony Clark from the Marist International Community in Atlantis, Cape Town, facilitated the retreat.

Tony led a series of reflections on the five calls of the XXII General Chapter. Besides the morning reflection, the program included group sharing, meditative walks, and evening prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

The retreat concluded with each of the Brothers renewing his vows, which were received by Brother Patrick Bushilya, who accompanied the Brothers during their retreat.

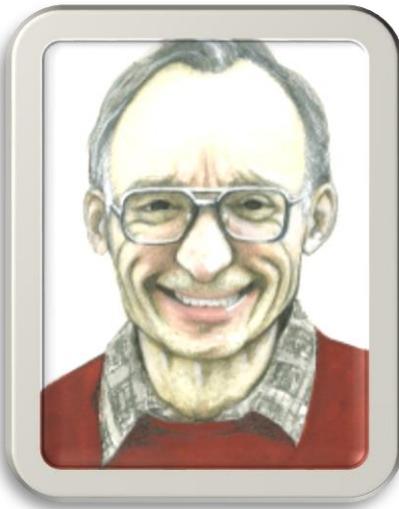


# **BEATIFICATION OF “MARTYRS OF ALGERIA” INCLUDING MARIST BROTHER HENRI VERGÉS TO TAKE PLACE IN ORAN, ALGERIA, 8 DECEMBER 2018**

**W**e are in the eve of a significant event for our Institute: very soon, **Brother Henri Vergès** will be enthroned to the roll of our holy brothers. He will not be alone! He will be part of a group of nineteen martyrs, victims of religious extremism of the 1990s in Algeria.

When our Marist Brothers schools were nationalized by the State, Brother Henri, who had been director of one of them (Saint Bonaventure School, in Algiers), decided not to return to France, his homeland, but to remain in the country in order to keep and deepen the fruitful ecumenical dialogue that he maintained with Muslim leaders. Since he could not renew his contract with the National Education, at the request of the bishop, he began to work in a library, where he welcomed young students from the quarter of Kasbah. In the daily service to the more than a thousand young people who attended the library, Henri gave witness to the Gospel and the love of the merciful God by concrete gestures of affection and words of life. We know the history. One Sunday, May 8, 1994, he died in his work place.

In 1976, during the XVI General Chapter, I had the opportunity to work with Brother Henri in the same Commission, that on Formation. Even though he was a missionary to Algeria, he represented in the Chapter, as an elected member, one of the former French



Provinces. His rich and thoughtful contributions to the discussions usually revolved around the need for those in formation to be made aware of the importance of interreligious dialogue and ecumenism, two themes now present in the calls of the Global Charismatic Family.

Who would have predicted that, years later, this peaceful and generous Brother would give his life out of love for a people he learned to love? Living saints do not wear haloes, nor are they distinguished by spectacular

gestures. What characterizes them, for sure, is the authenticity of their convictions and the coherence of their options. Throughout my life I have lived with holy brothers and I have met men and women of God, each illuminating, as a true lighthouse, the existence of those around them. I could mention Brother Basilio Rueda, Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, Dr. Zilda Arns, the *gaúcho* Brother Firmino, missionary to Africa, Bishop Hélder Câmara and many others! Extraordinary men and women in the ordinary actions of the everyday life!

By incredible blindness we recognize the saints only after they have left us! Are not we at this moment living with a saint? Look out! Praise and thank God for the saints who work alongside us!

*(Brother Claudino Falchetto)*

## **THE FULL LIST OF ALGERIAN MARTYRS**

**8 May 1994:** Brother Henri Vergès, and Sister Paul-Hélène Saint Raymond

**23 Oct 1994:** Sisters María Caridad Álvarez Martín and Esther Paniagua Alonso

**27 Dec 1994** Alain Dieulangard, Charles Decker, Jean Chevillard, and Christian Chessel, all Missionaries of Africa

**3 Sep 1995:** Sisters Dénise Leclerc, and Jeanne Littlejohn

**10 Nov 1995:** Sister Odette Prévost

**21 May 1996:** Christian de Chergé, Paul Dochier, Christophe Lebreton, Michel Fleury, Christian Lemarchand, Célestin Ringear, Paul Favre-Miville, all Trappists

**1 Aug 1996:** Bishop Pierre Claverie, Dominican



# ORGANOGRAM OF THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

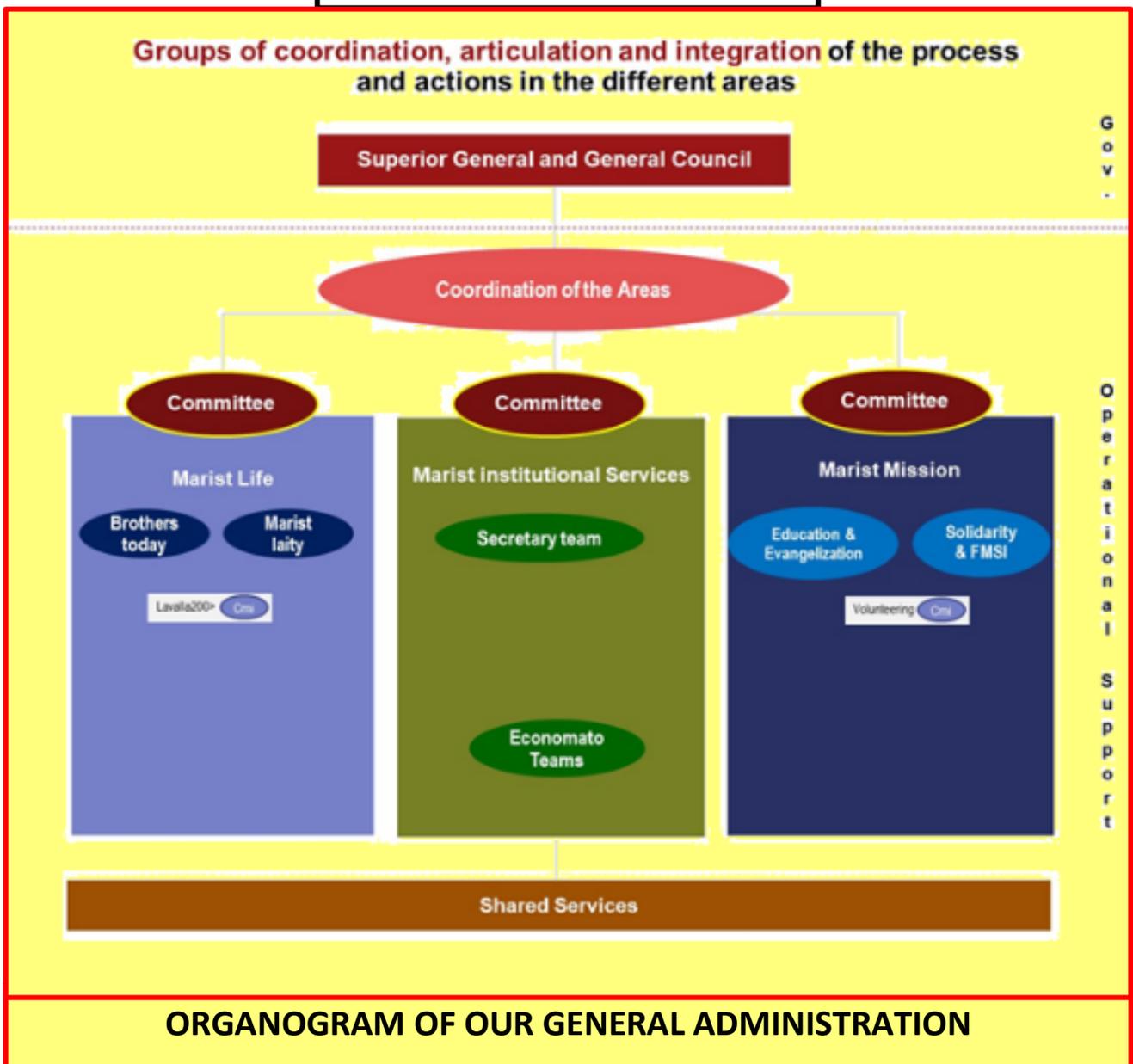
**O**n 9 September, the general council presented the new organisational chart of the general administration, for the period 2018 – 2025, to all the secretariats and services of the general administration.

The level of government is formed by the superior general and his council who have the role of leadership and decision-making, while the operational level focuses on the implementation and development of initiatives and processes of Marist life and mission under the responsibility of the general government.

The **NEW LOGO** of the General Administration was released a month later, on 10 October. It is shown immediately below.



One year in office marked on 3 Oct 2018



## ZAMBIA - SHARING OUR CALL

**T**eachers from each of our three schools in Zambia spent five days of their August holiday attending a **Sharing Our Call** workshop at the Kasisi Retreat Centre near Lusaka. Pam Paton-Mills and Mike Greeff from South Africa animated the sessions. This kind of short course is designed to help the staff of Marist Institutions to understand, appreciate and put into effect the elements of Champagnat's "charism". Our publication *In the Footsteps of Marcellin Champagnat* identifies five characteristics in Marist education: *PRESENCE – SIMPLICITY – FAMILY SPIRIT – LOVE OF WORK – IN THE WAY OF MARY*. Two "Marist Lay Leaders" from each school were given tools to help them be the guardians of the Marist spirit in their respective schools.



**Animators & Marist Lay Leaders**



## **LAUDATO SI' - THE CARE OF OUR COMMON HOME**



**Br Peter Zulu took part in a recent three-day workshop on the Encyclical of Pope Francis in Johannesburg**

## A SPECIAL DAY FOR TEACHERS IN BILENE, MOZAMBIQUE



**S**eptember 13 was a very different day for the Marist School of Bilene. It was dedicated to reflection by a number of students, staff and former students, with the objective of making more visible the presence of the Lay Marists in Mozambique.

The meeting, directed by Brother Teófilo Minga, centred on our document *Gathered around the*

*Same Table*, concentrating especially on the three dimensions mentioned in number 34: mission, shared life and spirituality. With the aid of both individual and group reflections, the participants articulated ideas for implementing Marist spirituality in Mozambique today.



One of the participants summarised the experience as follows: *"We want to continue our work of helping these abandoned children, thinking of Champagnat and in his way of working and also in the words of the recent General Chapter that encourages us to set out in search of the most needy. We are on the right track, but we need a stronger and more regular Marist presence"*.

[The photo on the left is taken from Bilene looking across the lagoon towards the opening to the Indian Ocean. Bilene lies approximately 100 km to the north east of Maputo as the crow flies. The journey by road is over 180 km.]



## POPE FRANCIS MEETS TWO BROTHERS DURING THE SYNOD

**Br ERNESTO SÁNCHEZ FMS and Br ROBERT SCHIELER FSC**



# A PROMINENT JEWISH ALUMNUS REMEMBERS ...

## TWO REMARKABLE MARIST TEACHERS

**N**early a century ago ago, Issy Maisels (1905 – 1994) was a schoolboy at Marist Brothers Koch Street, Johannesburg. He played in the First XI cricket team and the Second XI soccer team and in 1922 he earned a first class Matric. Perhaps his school career was a little better than average but few can have imagined then that he was to become one of South Africa's greatest advocates and that in time he would be The Hon. Mr. Justice I. A. Maisels. one of Her Majesty's Judges Of the High Court of Southern Rhodesia.

After the Second World War (1939-1945) he dominated many of the big trials in South Africa. His greatest triumph was in the *treason trial* for which he had led the defence team which demolished the State's case in an action that lasted more than four years.

In his memoirs published twenty years ago, he devoted the early pages to recalling his schooling at Marist Brothers, Koch Street. An extract follows:

When I was seven, my father took me to the Marist Brothers' School, which was situated at the corner of Koch and Claim Streets, just north of the railway line. I well remember his taking me there early one morning and introducing me to the headmaster (whose name I cannot recall) and then leaving me to fend for myself. I remained at that school until I matriculated in 1922.

The great Harry Morris, KC, recounts in his memoirs, *The First Forty Years*, that he too went to this school. He refers to certain of the brothers by name, one of whom - Brother Dominic - was at the school when I was there, many years after Harry Morris had left it. He also refers to Brother Valerian, who had died by the time I came to the school; but there was a book prize called the Valerian Prize, awarded in the Junior Matriculation class. I was the fortunate recipient of that prize in 1921. Morris wrote: **'The Brothers seemed to take a personal interest in every individual scholar'**.<sup>1</sup> I can fully endorse this remark, as the following instances will demonstrate.

<sup>1</sup> H Morris *The First Forty Years* (Cape Town: Juta, 1948), p. 23

<sup>2</sup> I. Maisels *A Life at Law* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1998), pp. 2-3

Shortly after the Second World War I took a tram to Yeoville. When I got off the tram, I saw a Marist brother - whom I recognised as Brother Vital - trying to catch the tram as it went off, but failing to do so. I went up to him and said, 'Brother, I don't suppose you remember me?' He looked at me for a moment, then said: **'Yes, I remember you. I remember when you got the Valerian Prize and I wrote down your name as Isaac instead of Israel and I had to correct it.'** He asked me to come and see him at the school, which had by then moved to Observatory. I did so and he told me that **he could**

**The TREASON TRIAL was a trial in Johannesburg in which 156 people, including Nelson Mandela, were arrested in a raid and accused of treason in South Africa in 1956. The main trial lasted until 1961, when all of the defendants were found not guilty. During the trials, Oliver Tambo left the country and was exiled.**

[Wikipedia](#)

**remember the first and surname of every boy who had been at the school when he was headmaster.** He also mentioned to me the interest he had in the careers of certain of the old boys.

Another example of the interest of the Brothers in their scholars was shown by my class teacher, Brother Pius, in 1913, when I was in Standard 1. When,

in 1948 - 35 years later - I was appointed King's Counsel, Brother Pius came to see me in my chambers to congratulate me.

Although Marist Brothers was, of course, a Catholic school, there were a number of Jewish boys. In fact I think the reason why my parents sent me to Marist Brothers was because two of my cousins and an uncle on my mother's side had been pupils at that school. Siegfried Raphaely, to whom I shall refer later, was one of the first matriculants at that school. He later played a prominent part in Jewish affairs. I cannot recall a single incident of anti-semitism during the whole of my schooldays. The Brothers fully respected the Jewish holy days and the consequent absence from school of Jewish boys on these holy days.<sup>2</sup>

**Brothers Vital and Pius practised the Marist value of PRESENCE - as described in our publication: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT.**



# NEW ARRIVALS WARMLY RECEIVED AT MIC

## A Province away from the Province

**S**ome people say “Life is how you make it *by yourself* – [understood].” But I think it one should acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of those who have helped us to make it in life. What we are today is not only by our efforts and hard work, but also because many people have sacrificed their time and energy to contribute to our well-being today. Stepping foot into a new land, with a new culture, a different way of doing things, is daunting and one may easily feel lost.

For the First Years at MIC, the opposite has happened. Having landed in Nairobi at Marist International Centre far from our native homes and Marist province, we still find ourselves at home! The Brothers from the Province of Southern Africa welcomed us in a special way with enthusiasm, wishing us well and encouraging us in our formative and academic programs here in Nairobi. The

Brothers were happy to see us and to join them as we progress in Marist life.

I feel inspired to have learnt and experienced that as a province we meet for gatherings and prayers on different occasions and at meetings to share our life. To me it is very reassuring to realise that even though we are far from home we are still within our province. I find that MIC is an opportunity to build our brotherhood as a bird builds its nest.

I would like to thank all the Brothers at MIC, most especially those of our Province, for their daily support for us first years. This is the a clear indication that the new beginning has already begun. It’s up to each of us to respond positively. May God bless us all.

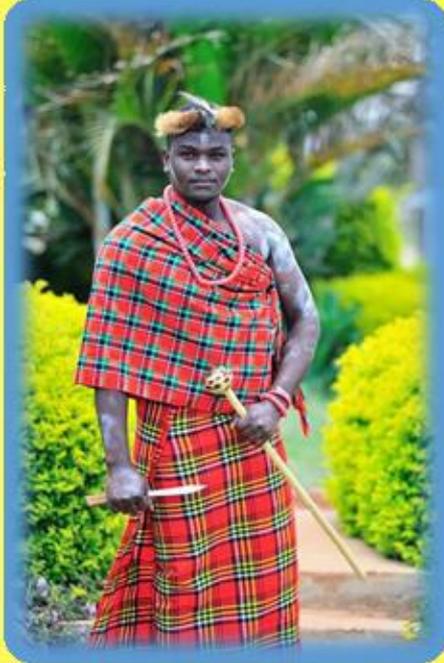
*Bro. Henry Ngeli (MIC, First Year)*



## CULTURAL DAYS AT MARIST INTERNATIONAL CENTRE



**WE'RE STILL AT ENJOYING MIC'S CULTURAL DAYS ...  
GUESS THE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN ...**



**MAGIC TRICKS IN OUR PRIMARY SCHOOL  
NDALATANDO, ANGOLA**

Children are spell-bound by the wizardry of the conjurer.



# CLASSROOM LIFE IN LUANDA



**HARD WORK!!**



**ENTHUSIASM!!**



# PHOTOS FROM THE JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



# PILGRIMAGE TO ROME & CHAMPAGNAT COUNTRY

During October, the new members of the Marist Schools Council in RSA were on pilgrimage. **The highlights in Rome** included: a canonisation ceremony; a papal audience; and Holy Mass in the catacombs. **In France:** residence at the Hermitage; a visit to La Rosey, Marcellin's birthplace; and Holy Mass around the Marcellin's home-made table at LaValla.



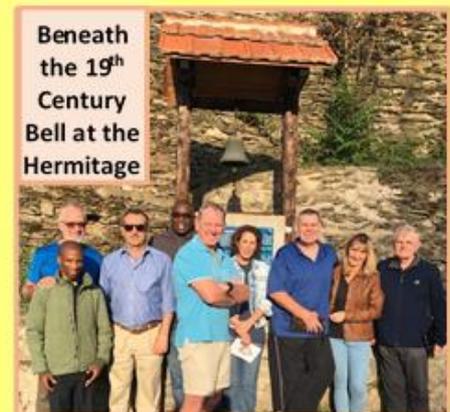
Queue to the Papal Audience



Visit to La Rosey, Marcellin's birthplace



Holy Mass at LaValla

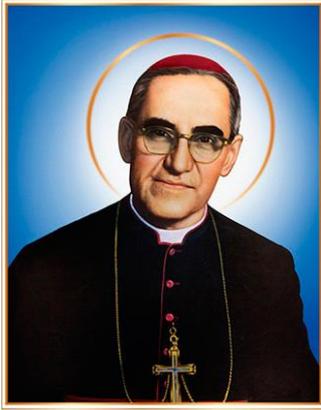


Beneath the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Bell at the Hermitage



IN THE CATACOMBS: Mike Greeff-Director of the MSC; Ian Grieve-Custodian; Janine Grieve-Iain's wife; Bridget Campbell-Tim's wife; Br Joe Walton; Fr Patrick Dladla OMI-chaplain & St David's alumnus; Tim Campbell-MSC; Br Fortune Chakasara-MSC; Gretta Tapscott-wife of Chris; Chris Tapscott-MSC; Mark Bussin-MSC

# NEWLY-CANONISED ST ÓSCAR ROMERO, BISHOP & MARTYR



## Early Life

Oscar Romero was born into a large family on August 15, 1917 in El Salvador. Although they had more money than many of their neighbours, Oscar's family had neither electricity nor running water in their small home, and the children slept on the floor.

Oscar's parents could not afford to send him to school after the age of twelve, so he went to work as an apprentice carpenter. He quickly showed great skills, but Oscar was already determined to become a priest. He entered the minor seminary<sup>3</sup> at the age of twelve and was ordained a priest when he was 25 in 1942.

Recognising the power of radio to reach the people, he convinced five radio stations to broadcast his Sunday sermons to peasant farmers who believed they were unwelcome in the churches.

In 1970, he became Auxiliary Bishop in San Salvador, the capital city of El Salvador. In 1974, he became Bishop of Santiago de Maria. At this time, Oscar Romero was described as a conservative, not wanting to break from tradition. He supported the hierarchy who encouraged conformity. He was uncomfortable with social action that challenged political leaders.

## Growing awareness

During his two years as Bishop of Santiago de Maria, Romero was horrified to find that children were dying because their parents could not pay for simple medicines. He began using the resources of the diocese and his own personal resources to help the poor, but he knew that simple charity was not enough. He wrote in his diary that people who are poor should not just receive handouts from the Church or the government but participate in changing their lives for the future.

In 1977, Romero became Archbishop of San Salvador, the capital city. The situation in El Salvador was becoming worse and he couldn't remain silent any longer. The military were killing the Salvadorian people – especially those demanding justice such as teachers, nuns and priests – including Romero's good friend, Fr Rutilio Grande.

Thousands of people began to go missing. Romero demanded that the President of El Salvador thoroughly investigate the killings, but he failed to do so.



## Voice of the voiceless

In his actions and words, Oscar demanded a peace that could only be found by ensuring people had access to basic needs and their rights upheld. He raised awareness globally about the people in his country who had been killed or "disappeared". When he visited the Vatican in 1979, Oscar Romero presented the Pope with seven detailed reports of murder, torture, and kidnapping throughout El Salvador.

In 1979, the number of people being killed rose to more than 3000 per month. Oscar Romero had nothing left to offer his people except faith and hope. He continued to use the radio broadcast of his Sunday sermons to tell people what was happening throughout the country, to talk about the role of the Church, and to offer his listeners hope that they would not suffer and die in vain.

## Martyrdom

On March 23, 1980, after reporting the previous week's deaths and disappearances, Oscar Romero began to speak directly to soldiers and policemen: *"I beg you, I*

<sup>3</sup> Where some of the teachers were Marist Brothers.

*implore you, I order you... in the name of God, stop the repression!*" The following evening, while saying Mass in the chapel of Divine Providence Hospital, Archbishop Oscar Romero was shot by a paid assassin.

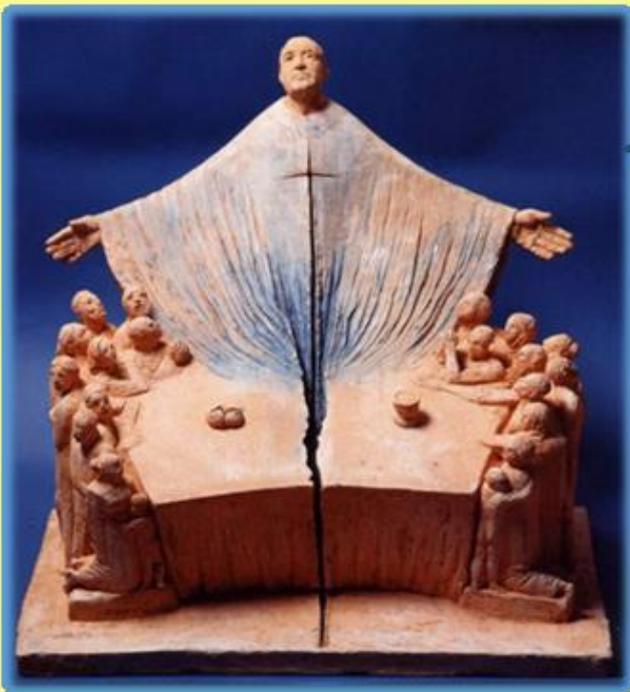
Only moments before his death, Romero spoke these prophetic words: *"Those who surrender to the service of the poor through love of Christ will live like the grain of wheat that dies... The harvest comes because of the grain that dies."* Like many great leaders who have

fought for truth, Oscar Romero was killed and became a martyr, but his voice could not be silenced. He is a symbol of hope in a country that has suffered poverty, injustice and violence.

Blessed Óscar Romero was canonised on Sunday 14 October 2018 by Pope Francis, together with five other "Blesseds" including Pope Paul VI.

*(Text from Caritas Australia)*

## EL SALVADORIANS CELEBRATE THEIR FIRST SAINT



Monument to Óscar Romero in the city of San Salvador

Members of a Marist youth group pray at the special Mass in San Salvador a day before the canonisation ceremony.



## BR NORBERT'S TRAVELS: OCT 2018– JAN 2019

- 25 Oct: Lusaka to Harare
- 25 Oct: Marist House, Harare
- 27 Oct: Kutama Community.
- 03 Nov: Nyanga Community
- 10 Nov: Marist House, Harare
- 12 Nov: Dete
- 18 Nov: Victoria Falls to Joburg
- 22 - 23 Nov COUNCIL MEETING Jo'burg
- 24 Nov Council meets Custodians
- 26 Nov Joburg to Matola



- 01 Dec First Profession Matola
- 03 Dec Matola to Joburg
- 09 Dec Joburg to Lusaka
- 16-23 Dec Retreat in Lusaka
- 27 Dec Holiday & Family Visit
- 15 Jan Lusaka to Joburg
- 18-19 Jan COUNCIL MEETING
- 20 Jan Joburg to Nairobi
- 28 Jan – 02 Feb CONF. OF SUPERIORS

